

# MASCULINE GARB ALARMS the HOTEL CLERK.

BY IRVIN S. COBB.

THERE strode through the lobby of the St. Rockless, a strange spectacle. The foundation for the apparition was a slender young man, apparently just escaped from a 'rarsly' tailor that had been drinking to excess. Superimposed upon this was a green plush hat with a brim that rolled like the ocean wave and a cock's feather, similar to the kind formerly worn by comic opera bandits before the audience began to rebel. Over one arm trailed an overcoat revealing a lining with a pattern that was a cross between the hunting plaid of the Douglas clan and the markings on a peep's coat. The trousers were of a singular skimp pattern, being apparently designed with a view to bringing out the irregularities of the knee joints, and they were turned up quite a distance from the bottom, thereby causing a well-nigh criminal exposure of low-cut shoes, latched with harness buckles, and striped hose of a poisonous appearance. The coat was a medley of blue pockets, fringed lapels, cuffs that had been seemingly worked out on a scrollaw and rows of buttons that stunted up the sleeves and down the front. Finishing touches were afforded by an inflammatory stock collar, a pair of yellow gloves with ridges down their backs like the nine-banded armadillo and a sweater vest in which green wool fought purple worsted all over the bosom, with a double row of large pearl buttons acting as a referee.

"Very kutush," murmured the Hotel Clerk as he watched the glorified youth swing by. "Look quick, Larry, and see if there's a bracelet, watch strapped on his left wrist. If there is, the picture's complete, only there ought to be a law against that kind of a picture."

"Don't be too hard on the kid," said the House Detective. "He's probably color blind and don't know no better. He looks pretty callow, anyway."

"Quite so," assented the Hotel Clerk. "At least sixteen callow-power, I should say, and maybe thirty-two. Any time that lad's intellect should totter on its throne, I bet it would be but a tiny tot. I don't blame him. But there's a lot of men old enough and fat enough to know better that's been guilty of dressing up like a Chinese New Year this Fall—they're the ones I'm bitter against."

"Ain't a party got a right to dress the way he wants to, so long as he don't scare no horses nor throw young teethin' children into convulsions?" asked the House Detective.

"Not a moral right, Larry," said the Hotel Clerk. "Legally, yes; morally, no. When a grown man begins to apparel himself in such a manner as to make people think he's just been hatched out of a pink Easter egg, he's striking a deliberate blow at the foundation of his own liberties. He may not know it, poor misguided creature that he is, in his sassy director's coat and his Louis Kahn's flowered evening waistcoat and his Chippendale pants, but that's what he's doing. It's on the strength of the clothes proposition that we continue to keep the ostensibly weaker sex in partial sub-



THERE STRODE ACROSS THE LOBBY OF THE STRECKLESS A STRANGE SPECTACLE.

jection, Larry. To whisper a secret to you, we call 'em the weaker sex, but they're not; on the contrary, far from it. But as long as they think they're the weaker sex and dress to match the part, we can still manage to make 'em think so too. If we don't fall into any serious sartorial errors such as dressing ourselves up like feeble imitations of the original Florodora Sextette."

"When does a man look more foolish than he does any other time? The answer is easy: When he's trying to match a sample for his wife in a department store. How much foolisher he'll look when he goes around trying to match a sample of elephant's

breath or mashed cantaloupe tint in order to complete the color scheme of his own winsome costume. "It seems natural for a woman to crave openwork clothes and a shir-waist that buttons up the back. I guess maybe the first fig leaf that Eve wore was worn eaten and no doubt the primitive armor of the Amazons was made in one piece. And so long as the women stay interested in picture hats that are not pictures, and prided gowns that are not periods, but exclamation points, we needn't be afraid that the Suffragette movement will jam us through the back—not yet awhile. "I knew a man once that let his

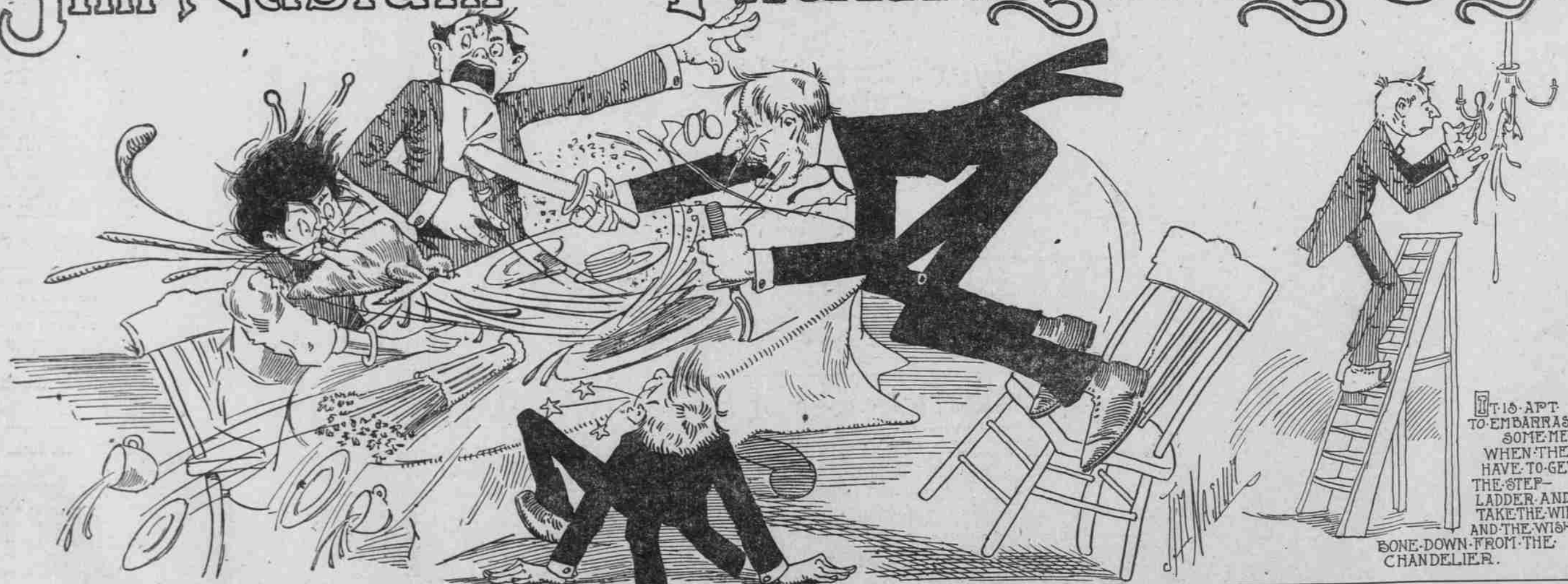
whiskers grow until he washed his face by wiping off his forehead with a damp towel. There was a rumor in his neighborhood in the latter years of his life that when he wanted to locate any particular feature, he had to send a terrier in to find it. But he retained the respect of his community, except the barber, and kept his domestic affairs well in hand, because nobody could ever have any ground to suspect him of trying to look lady-like. He reminded you a good deal of a lichen growth, but he likewise bore some resemblance to a man. "And I know another chap that quit growing about the point where most others began. He had camel's hair eyelashes and there wasn't enough of his face to cover his front teeth. He had an impediment in his speech of a liquid nature, like a syphon, and if he talked face to face with you five minutes you were entitled to a rain check. If you spent half an hour in conversation with him, you'd feel as if you'd been sitting under the needle shower in a Turkish bath with your clothes on. He was mild-mannered in the extreme. You couldn't conceive of him leading a forlorn hope over the breastworks. You couldn't picture him sitting in the White House as President. It took a long, strong stretch of the mind to imagine him intimidating a pet white rat or lording it over a well-broke gold fish. But in the course of time he married a large, strong lady who'd been a tennis champion. She could swim farther than he could go in a rolling chair without feeling fatigued. Yet he remained the boss of the establishment. Cause why? Because he wore ordinary man's duds and learned to smoke a cigar that looked like a yellow clarinet and never under any circumstances or in any temptation permitted himself to be at all charmed up like in spectacular habiliments. The roof of his main office was invariably one of those three-dollar felt derbies. His benjamin was intended to warm him exclusively and not to light up the winter landscape. He never felt that his terminal facilities required anything to set them off except plain, human hair and congress gaiters. But just suppose he's come home some evening under a green plush lid with a rooster's feather in it. His wife would have had his real number in thirty seconds. You can't dress up like a lightning-bug, Larry, and pass for a bald eagle, not in this variable climate. The only way we hold the women down in this country is by keeping them so busy with their private wardrobes that they haven't got time to take charge of the official bureau. Any time we take to cutting in on their domain, they'll take to cutting in on ours, and then I adder to think where we'll be, because any female that can do with a halpin what you and me can't do with a tool bit and a book of instructions, could beat any man alive out of his job if she only made up her mind she wanted it. "Well, if we don't go delirious studying the new fashion plates, we've got the bulge on the women one way, anyhow," said the House Detective.

"By nature men ain't as vain as the women." "I wouldn't like to commit myself too far on that point," replied the Hotel Clerk, slowly. "As the college professors say, yes and no. Did you ever see a man with wish-bone legs and a chest development like the letter A that wouldn't always pick out the Richard the Lion-Hearted costume for his when he was going to a masquerade ball, with the Sir Walter Raleigh outfit as second choice? What's the first thing an ordinary man does when he gets an appointment on some governor's staff? What he has himself measured for a uniform with nine pounds of gold lace and gilded vermiform appendixes draped over the front of it. And what's the second thing he does? He puts on those brass-mounted up-bid you ever see that a photographer holsterings and horns a photographer on it to wear, and there's no stranger a couple of hundred men will turn out to attend a lodge funeral and walk four miles on a hot day to a cemetery on a hill, and arrive there in such a state that it's a question which ought to be buried first—the remains or the marchers. It's because of the regalia prescribed by the ritual for such sad occasions, that's why. If it wasn't for the sashes and the gladsome helmets and the shiny swords and the red-cross belts, the deceased could get out and bury himself for all a lot of us would care. But give us a spear-head on a pole to tote, and a hat with a plume so alone in the world but what a large crowd of the uniformed rank will line up behind a brass band and accompany him to his last resting place. "No, Larry, man hasn't lost his love for the feathers since the time when he was evicted out of the peacock period. But up to the present, he's mainly managed to disguise his natural inclinations fairly well. But now with the fashions for men what they are and the haberdasher's window looking like a place where a Syrian family has hung out its wash, and purple shirts and pink socks coming in, I fear for the worst. It looks like we're a doomed race if this keeps up. "Aw, cheer up," said the House Detective. "Thanksgiving Day's almost here, and Teddy says we've got a lot to be thankful for." "Yes, that's what Teddy said, but did you hear any remark on the subject of William Jennings Bryan?" said the Hotel Clerk.

### Embryo Birds.

They had met for the first time since their school days, and were telling each other of their professional careers. "And how did you come to leave the stage?" asked one. "I had a hint that I was not suited for it." "I see. The little birds told you, eh?" "Well, no, not exactly. But they might have been birds had they been allowed to hatch."

# Jim Nasium on Thanksgiving Day.



IT IS APT TO EMBARRASS SOME MEN WHEN THEY HAVE TO GET THE STEP-LADDER AND TAKE THE WING AND THE WISH-BONE DOWN FROM THE CHANDELIER.

ARE you now nearing the date of our annual National Thanksgiving? The President has issued his proclamation setting aside November 25 as a day of prayer and thanksgiving for blessings of the past year, the wild-eyed turkey gobbler sends the approach of impending doom and sneaks off through the underbrush to escape the eye of the blood-thirsty farmer with a broadax up his sleeve, and already the amateur carver is beginning to study up the puzzling anatomical arrangement of the turkey family and practicing short-arm hooks and saber slashes with the carving-knife.

It seems strange, but nevertheless true, that there has never yet been published a reliable handbook on the anatomy of the turkey gobbler. Society is sadly lacking in a knowledge of the inner workings and ball-bearing joints and sliding pistons of the adult turkey. In a deceased and well-browned state. In all my large efforts of acquaintance, I cannot recall a single man who is sufficiently familiar with turkey anatomy to enable him to set a carving-knife on Thanksgiving day or Christmas and find the exact place

where the leg is hitched onto the main bulwarks of the animal, without filling the air with stuffing and half-smothered profanity and drowning the guests in gravy.

This state of ignorance that prevails in society renders our holidays to be dreaded by the man who is compelled by custom to stand up in company and make a public display of his ignorance and bespattered cripples of his family and friends, as well as by the ones who risk their lives by sitting around the festive board to watch him in the hope that there will be enough turkey left after the wrestling match to satisfy their inner cravings. I often wonder why the directors of our educational system do not supplant the study of human anatomy in our public schools with the study of turkey anatomy, as it so seldom occurs that a student has occasion to cut up a human being, while he may frequently be called upon to carve a turkey.

This ignorance in regard to the inner workings of the turkey gobbler causes a great many people to harbor feelings foreign to the true spirit of the occasion on Thanksgiving day. It requires a vast amount of Christian forbearance to keep

your mind concentrated on the blessings of life when the friend who has invited you to dinner on Thanksgiving finds that the hip joint of the deceased gobbler is located in a different place than where he thought it was, and during his frantic efforts to locate it the turkey slides off the platter into your wife's face and the carving-knife is buried in your bosom.

However, it isn't with malice aforethought that the amateur carver accomplishes this feat. The situation is just as embarrassing to him as it is to the company of guests who are taking a gray shower bath and dodging the stuffing. The man who has ever attempted to carve a turkey in the presence of others knows how it taxes his self-control and stretches the limitations of the profane language. It isn't every man who can maintain his presence of mind and self-control sufficient to pick the bird out of the lap of one of his guests and make a fresh start, and it is apt to embarrass some men when they have to get the step-ladder and take the wing and the wishbone down from the chandelier in the presence of company.

The safest plan is to excuse yourself from the guests under some pretext or other and smuggle the roasted turkey

into the woodshed, where you can tackle the job alone with a cross-cut saw and a double-bit ax. It may mess up the interior of the woodshed some and taint the white meal, but it is a great saving to the wallpaper and the clothing of the guests, to say nothing of your own dignity and sangfroid, whatever that is.

Every Fall as Thanksgiving approaches, I always issue a new mortgage on my little home and invest in a turkey, just to see how they are putting them together this year. I have never yet found two turkeys with a framework built along the same architectural design. Some seasons they seem to forget to put in the joints and you have to cut them apart with a hammer and a cold chisel, while other seasons you will find plenty of joints, but they are tied up so with sheet iron bands that you have to take the stuffing out with a can opener. I have often thought that some day, when I have time, I would design a turkey along the same general lines as the centipede, so that each one of the children could have a leg and do away with the customary practice of deciding the question according to the rules of the Marquis of Queensberry, and awarding the legs to

the two who are on their feet at the end of the last round.

I know it is wrong to harbor such sentiments on a day that is intended for thanksgiving and prayer, but somehow after the Thanksgiving dinner has been served, my family relations appear to become strained. My wife and the children seem to avoid my presence in terror, and after I have kicked the cat into a three-cornered mess under the kitchen range and smashed up the bric-a-brac, I usually go down to the market and assassinate the butcher who sold me the jointless turkey.

As Thanksgiving day approaches don't get it into your head that you have nothing to be thankful for. If you are glad you are alive you have much to be thankful for. If other people are glad you are alive you have a great deal more to be thankful for. There aren't many men living in the world today who cause the rest of the world to offer up thanks for that fact. Aside from the mental giant who is penning these lines, I doubt if there are a half dozen men of this sort in the country today.

Aside from the bare fact of being alive, the past year has brought us all much to

be thankful for. We who are struggling in the depths of poverty and have to earn our bread by the skin of our teeth should be thankful that we do not belong to a trust and have politicians knocking on the eternal daylight out of us in the public press and taking our money in our private office, and we should also be thankful that we cannot afford an affinity and have our wife, perhaps the only wife we have, too, and one that is healthy and strong and willing to work and we cannot afford to lose, seeing us for divorce and alimony in the courts. The past year has brought us the affinity fall and the poisons out of illegal combinations of wealth in restraint of trade, but they can't touch us, so we should be thankful.

Those who are rolling in wealth should be thankful that the campaign is over and they can appear in public again and having every unborn politician and dinky sheet in the universe assailing his character and using him as a scapegoat for campaign material. Of course, a great many of us would no doubt be glad to furnish campaign material in this way.

If any party wishes to use me as campaign material I think I would rather be used as a bloated capitalist who is cornering the wealth of the universe than any way I know of. Any political faction that is looking for campaign material of this sort will please write me at this office with instructions as to how to get the capital. I am perfectly willing to be a predatory wealthy, and I am used to being called vile names and do not mind it in the least. At that, though, I think I would be thankful when the campaign is over.

To enumerate the many things that we have to be thankful for would cause me to jam this paper so full of copy that there would be no room for the sporting page or the beauty column and it would probably crowd out some well-paying ads, so I will not attempt it. Which is another reason why you should all be thankful.

Men as Great Babies.

London Sketch.

Woman, deep down in the depths of her being, looks upon all masculine things, of whatever age, as great babies, to be soothed and nursed.